TRANS-CAUCASIA, 1918-1919.

By Captain C. E. Temperley, O.B.E., M.C.

After the Bolsheviks had brought about the collapse of the Russian Empire, they lost no time in coming to terms with the Central Powers and on 3 March 1918 signed a Treaty of Peace with Germany and Turkey at Brest Litovsk. By this Treaty they agreed to hand over to the Turks the provinces of Kars, Batum and Ardahan, which had formed part of the old Russian Governor-Generalship of Trans-Caucasia.

The Turks needed no second invitation. Brushing aside a hastily organized resistance by the Christian inhabitants, they quickly swept over the ceded provinces and, by the end of April 1918, were in possession of a large slice of Trans-Caucasia. They were peacefully engaged in looting this new territory and in suppressing its inhabitants when the Turkish forces on the other fronts gave in, and the War in the Near East came to an end.

One of the terms of the subsequent armistice (Mudros, 30 October 1918) laid down that the Turkish troops were to be withdrawn from these stolen provinces and that the whole of Trans-Caucasia was to be taken over and administered by the British until its ultimate fate could be decided by the Peace Conference. The troops chosen for this duty were the 27th Division, of which the 4th Battalion formed a part.

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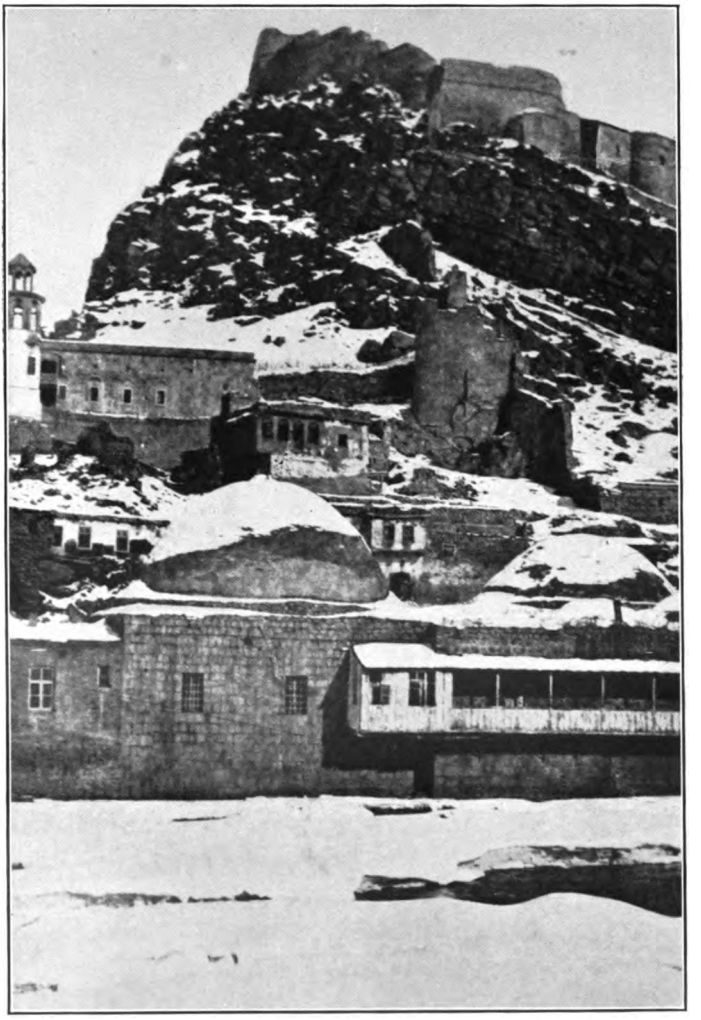

THE CITADEL OF KARS WITH THE FROZEN KARSKI RIVER IN THE FOREGROUND.

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At the end of October 1918 the 4th Battalion were resting in bivouac at Dupnitza, about thirty miles south of Sofia, where we had halted after the one hundred and fifty mile advance which had ended the War with Bulgaria. Early in November we received orders to return to Salonika, and on the following morning we turned our backs on Sofia and the wily Bulgar, set our faces to the sea and began ticking off the days that separated us from England.

Back we trudged through the gloomy Kresna Defile still stinking with dead Bulgar transport animals ; by decauville railway down the narrow valley of the Upper Struma ; thence through Rupel Pass, the key to Macedonia, which was lost to the Allies by Greek treachery in 1916 ; on foot again across the Struma Valley and so back to old familiar landmarks, Gudeli Bridge, Coles Cop, Kilo 60 ; by lorry down the Seres Road, and finally to camp outside Salonika ; ten days' journey, and ten days, we reckoned, nearer home.

A few days later the 27th Division received orders to be ready to embark at short notice—but not, alas, for home. Our destination, we were told, was Trans-Caucasia, that mountainous country at the uttermost end of the Black Sea, the Land of the Golden Fleece of the ancient Greeks, whither King Pelias sent Jason to be rid of him, and whither we had a shrewd idea the War Office were sending us for the same reason.

On 16 December 1918 the Battalion, together with other elements of the 27th Division, embarked at Salonika in H.M.T. "Katoomba," and on the same day sailed for Batum.

We stopped for one day at Constantinople en route and, after a smooth passage across the Black

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Sea, arrived at Batum on the evening of 23 December. Disembarkation began at once and, in spite of certain difficulties not unconnected with the Australian crew and their discovery of the mess whisky in the forward hold, we finally managed to land ourselves and our baggage on the deserted quay, whence we proceeded through the town to camp under canvas on the Aerodrome.

Before our arrival some inquisitive soul had unearthed from the ship's "Black Sea Pilot" the fact that Batum had the heaviest rainfall in the Caucasus, and, in confirmation of this, one of the ship's officers told us that a misguided vessel had once gone there with a cargo of salt (which cannot be unloaded in the rain); after lying there nine months in a continual downpour she had come away in disgust with her cargo of salt intact. On the night of our arrival these gloomy accounts were amply confirmed; it began raining almost as soon as we had pitched our tents, and by midnight the water was half-way up the legs of the officers' beds. Everybody turned out and spent the rest of the night in gum boots diving for the heavier portions of their kit and chasing the lighter portions round the tent pole.

However, dawn came at last, and with it the discovery that an obviously filthy Turkish Barracks and an apparently clean and certainly water-tight Turkish Hospital faced our camp. By the time the Brigade-Major arrived to inquire after our health the Battalion was comfortably installed in the Hospital and the C.O. was superintending the decent cremation of a selection of pickled infants in smashed bottles which had rather depreciated the value of the Hospital museum as an Officers' Mess.

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During this day the remainder of the 80th Brigade disembarked, and Brigadier-General Cooke Colliss, Commanding, was appointed Military Governor of Batum. The Battalion's duties consisted in patrolling the streets of Batum, in finding sentries for dumps of Turkish military stores and in putting control posts on the roads leading out of the town to check the withdrawal of the Turkish troops and to search their baggage for loot. There was a certain amount of sniping at night, but otherwise nothing exciting happened.

Christmas Day 1918, two days after we landed, was celebrated on bully beef and biscuits.

Our stay in Batum was a brief one. On 29 December the Battalion received short notice to entrain for Tiflis, the capital of Georgia, which lies half-way between the Black Sea and the Caspian.

On the outbreak of Bolshevism the north-eastern part of Trans-Caucasia, which had not been occupied by the Turks, had divided itself up into three "Republics": Georgia in the north, Azerbaijan in the east, and Armenia in the south. Each of these Republics was exceedingly jealous of the other two; each insisted, amongst other things, upon running its own railways without any reference to the time-table or rolling stock requirements of its neighbours. Hence it was no simple matter to arrange a through train of any sort.

However, by a combination of tact and blasphemy, the Brigade-Major finally managed to make up a train for us, and on the evening of 30 December we left for Tiflis.

All that night and the next day we travelled up the broad valley of the Rion and, by evening, had

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come to the foot of the pass that leads over the Suram Mountains into the uplands of Georgia. Here, on the first steep grade we met, our single locomotive came to an ignominious and panting halt. After a series of back-breaking jolts and some yards retreat down-hill, the driver got down and informed us that the train would have to go up the bank in two portions, the rear half joining up again several miles farther on at the top of the pass. The front half, containing Battalion Headquarters and the four Companies, was accordingly uncoupled and proceeded on its way, leaving the transport and some of the baggage trucks to be picked up by another locomotive and to follow on.

Late that evening we halted at a station on top of the rise to wait for the rest of the train. Dawn found us still waiting, and our patience was not improved by the fact that the Battalion breakfast was twenty miles away with the transport half of the train, while the transport animals' fodder was with our half. The local station-master, most sympathetic, was strongly of the opinion that we would never see our breakfasts at all, for, said he proudly, the Caucasian single track railways were run on the most modern American automatic safety system, and this made it quite impossible for the second half of our train to enter any one section until we ourselves had got off the next one ahead; as long as we moved, they could follow, but the moment we stopped the ingenious American engineers had made doubly sure that our breakfast should automatically stop as well.

Short of a charge of dynamite under the signal box there was apparently no way out of the difficulty. As Tiflis was stated to be only a few hours ahead, we

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decided to telephone for rations to meet the train, and to push on there without delay.

In fact we did not arrive at Tiflis until the middle of that afternoon—a very hungry Battalion indeed! As a result of our telegram, the British Mission, under Colonel Jordan, already installed in Tiflis, had bestirred itself, and we found Georgian Army rations waiting for us on the platform—bread, beef, vegetables, tea and sugar—and surprisingly good they were too.

By the time the Battalion had finished their tardy breakfast, the transport had safely arrived, and orders were given for the animals to be unloaded and picketed in the station yard. For this purpose it was necessary to move the trucks to the special ramp at the end of the station. But this did not prove as simple as it sounded; to get a train moved in Tiflis station it was apparently necessary to obtain a written order from the Georgian Minister of Railways. Jamieson, the Transport Officer, said he could not wait the necessary two days for this to be done and announced his intention (the whole Cabinet notwithstanding) of requisitioning the first locomotive he found. The station-master demurred; Jamieson insisted; the station-master held out a restraining hand; whereupon Jamieson led him firmly to a goods truck, locked him in, and proceeded to board the nearest engine. However, the driver, also a stickler for red tape, insisted on an order from the station-master before he would move. Jamieson produced his revolver; the driver changed his mind; and the mules were unloaded without further difficulty.

By this time it was late in the evening and it was decided to spend the rest of the night in the train. Next morning, having finished detraining, we marched

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through Tiflis to billets in the "Seminary Barracks." On the way up we passed some of Von Cress's German troops, fully armed, marching down to the station, and we later learnt that it was these troops who had been turned out of the Barracks to make room for us. As a result, instead of the indescribably filthy mess usually left behind by Turkish or even by Russian troops, we found our billets teutonically clean and tidy.

It has already been said that, on the collapse of Imperial Russia, the Georgians, the Armenians and the Azerbaijanlis had set up their own independent "Republics." Now each of these races had excellent historical, theological and political reasons for cutting the throats of the other two; and, as soon as the Armistice removed the menace of further Turkish invasion, each set about this important business in its own particular fashion. The Azerbaijanlis, being simple moslem peasant-folk, contented themselves with raiding Georgian and Armenian villages for cattle and women. The Georgians and Armenians, however, being grander gentry, would not be content with anything less than a proper War—with Pronunciamentos, Ultimatums, Declarations, and all the other furbelows. Marvellous to relate, at the time of our arrival at Batum, the much despised Armenians were winning. By the ancient stratagem of rolling rocks down the mountain side they had managed to block the railway behind the Georgian troops and had captured three armoured trains, some field guns and a certain number of men. What was more important, they had pushed forward into position to launch an attack on Tiflis itself. On the very eve of victory, however, the Armenians had had their hopes dashed to the ground by the untimely

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intervention of the Quartermaster of the Gloucestershire Regiment. He had arrived unexpectedly at the scene of hostilities and had insisted on the immediate cessation of "this unnecessary waste of Government stores." The Armenians objected of course, but realizing the utter uselessness of arguing with a Quartermaster, they finally gave way, and an armistice was duly signed.

Shortly before we reached Tiflis the Georgians had discovered, so they said, the Armenians infringing the *status quo*, and—the Quartermaster of the Gloucesters not being available at the moment—hostilities were at once resumed.

Before we left Tiflis Station for our billets we saw the passage of some of the Georgian troops hastening to the new war. The soldiers' way of showing their mettle consisted in firing off their rifles in all directions. As large crowds of patriotic citizens had collected at the station to see them pass, it was a wonder no one was hit.

This habit of letting off your rifle to show jubilation is apt to lead to misunderstanding. On another occasion a trainload of Georgians, to show their affection for a Gurkha railway post, leant out of the carriage windows, gave three hearty cheers and began firing their rifles into the air. The simple Gurkhas, only too pleased to think there might be a war on and rather misunderstanding the friendly gesture, promptly brought their Lewis gun to bear and raked the crowded train from stem to stern with a hail of bullets—an episode for which, by the by, the Georgians apologized.

To return to the renewed war between Georgia and Armenia—the Quartermaster of the Gloucestershire Regiment not being available—Douglas, with

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"C" Company and an interpreter, was despatched by rail to the scene of hostilities to reason with the combatants. With his Lewis guns mounted on the engine, Douglas set off on his mission of peace, and the same afternoon arrived at the Georgian Army Headquarters. He interviewed the Georgian Commander-in-Chief, General Magnieff (late Russian Army), and ordered him to "cease fire" at dawn the next morning. He then pushed on to the mining village of Alaverdi, which lay between the contending parties, and there dropped the majority of his Company to act as a sort of bulkhead, while he himself, with a guard of twenty men, went farther down the line to the Armenian Headquarters. There he summoned the Armenian General Dro, a famous "Leader of Bands" (a high title in a nation that, for centuries, has been "agin the Government"), and told him also to stop all hostilities on the following morning. Douglas, feeling that he had done a good day's work, dined amicably with Dro, and, by midnight, was back with his men at Alaverdi; and peace reigned in the land.

A few days later Douglas was ordered to clear out all Armenian and Georgian troops from a strip of country along the frontier and to take this over and administer it himself under the name of the Borchalou Neutral Zone.

In the meantime news of the Armistice had arrived in Tiflis and the Georgians, heartily thankful that the menace of an Armenian attack on Tiflis was again removed, proceeded to celebrate the occasion. The streets were decorated, bands played, and a procession paraded round the town, with the apparently sole casualty of the late fighting at its head.

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VIEW OF THE NEW TOWN OF KARS
FROM THE CITADEL.

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When the Battalion was well established in Tiflis, Divisional Headquarters moved there from Constantinople. Soon after their arrival Major-General Forestier Walker, Commanding, left again for Kars, the south-west province of the Caucasus, to investigate the position of the Turkish troops there and to arrange for their early withdrawal into Turkey in conformity with the terms of the Armistice. He found the position somewhat as follows:—When the Turkish troops, after the Treaty of Brest Litovsk, advanced through Kars, the Moslem inhabitants (Tartars) rose and joined them, and the combined forces proceeded to massacre all the infidel Armenians they could lay their hands on. The most part of the infidels, however, having learnt by experience what to expect, packed up what belongings they could carry and sought refuge in the Alexandropol and Erivan districts, which lay to the east. In a short time Kars Province was practically empty of Armenians (who, at one time, had formed the majority of the population) and the Alexandropol and Erivan districts of Armenia proper were crammed with terrified refugees.

Having disposed of the Christian inhabitants in this satisfactory manner, Shefki Pasha, the Turkish Commander-in-Chief, turned his mind to the more serious business of thoroughly pillaging the occupied country. Any Armenian and Russian property which had escaped the first wave of Turkish troops and Tartar irregulars was collected "for safety's sake" in dumps, and these dumps had a way of moving nearer the Turkish frontier during the night. But, more important than movable property in a country where starvation is everyone's next-door neighbour,

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all the available corn was collected for removal into Turkey, even the Moslem inhabitants having to give up a heavy proportion of their crops. By the time of General Walker's arrival in Kars, much of this corn and loot had made its way over the frontier into Turkey, but there still remained large dumps at Kars, Sarikamish, Olti, Jurjuna, and possibly at other less accessible spots.

In the meantime, just over the way in Armenia, famine stalked through the land. Penniless, with no property except the rags they wore, with a barrier of Turkish troops between themselves and their homes, the Armenian refugees from Kars, Van and Erzeroum were dependent for their sustenance on the charity of a local population who had scarcely enough for their own needs, and on the few car loads of corn which the American Relief Committee were able, from time to time, to get through to them. As the supply from these sources was scarcely sufficient to support a tenth part of the refugees, the majority were slowly but surely starving to death.

On his return to Tiflis, General Walker sent for the present writer to meet him at the train and there outlined the above situation. He went on to say that the Province of Kars would have to be taken over by the British forthwith, the transportation of corn and loot into Turkey stopped, the Turkish troops packed off back into Turkey, and the starving refugees in Armenia repatriated to their homes in Kars as soon as possible. In order to effect these ends he had decided to send down to Kars one company of The Rifle Brigade. With them was to go the writer, who was to assume the rôle and title (with all the accompanying pomp and circumstance, but without extra

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pay) of British Military Governor of the Province. In order to assist the new Governor in his duties, General Walker had arranged with Shefki Pasha and the Armenian Government at Erivan for the civil administration of the Province to be taken over by an Armenian staff, which we were to pick up on our way through Alexandropol.

Finally General Walker stated that he had just received a wire from Constantinople instructing him to arrest, if possible, one " Shefket Pasha," who had been concerned in the recent massacre of Armenians in Kars. Possibly this was a misprint for " Shefki Pasha " ; if so, he would send us a wire and we were to arrest the Turkish Commander-in-Chief and send him to Tiflis. He kindly added that we were not to risk any casualties in so doing.

On the morning of 11 January the following party assembled at Tiflis Station—the B.M.G.[1] ; Lieutenant Prosser and Lieutenant Gore-Langton, who were to form his staff ; " B " Company, with Witham, Breingan, Coghill, and 127 other ranks ; and Lieutenant Wallace, R.A.M.C. Our train was also to carry General Beach, who had been sent by G.H.Q., Constantinople, on an Intelligence Mission in the Caucasus, and Captain Poidebard of the French Mission.

After waiting all day at the station for the line to be cleared, we finally got away at about 10 p.m. On waking up next morning we found that the train had travelled during the night the considerable distance of thirty miles and was peacefully halted at the village of Sadakhlo. There followed the customary swearing match between the engine driver in unruffled Russian, the local station-master in emphatic Georgian,

[1] British Military Governor.

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and the O.C. train in frantic Billingsgate, which ended in our triumphant departure at 9 a.m.

In the course of the morning we passed through the Borchalou Neutral Zone, and at Alaverdi had a fleeting glance of Douglas and his harbingers of peace. That afternoon we left the broad valley of the Kura and began to wind our way up into the Armenian highlands. With every mile we climbed the snow lay more deeply on the ground, the scenery became more wild and more mountainous, and the operas, the cafés, and the beautiful maidens of Tiflis more and more regrettably distant. In the course of the day we managed to complete another thirty miles (in nine hours) and by nightfall had arrived at Karaklis, the Armenian Army Headquarters. Here General Beach inspected an imposing guard of honour which was waiting to welcome us. After this ceremony all Officers dined at the Armenian Headquarters.

At two o'clock the next morning (13 January 1919) we arrived at Alexandropol, and even at this unearthly hour we found a guard of honour awaiting us.

Alexandropol, lying at the junction of the Kars, Erivan and Tiflis Railways, used to be a town of some importance in Armenia. During the War, however, some harassed General on the eve of his departure had put a match to the local powder magazine and had blown half the town to pieces; so that at the time of our arrival the majority of buildings were in ruins.

It was against the ragged background of these ruins, in the uncanny half-light which precedes the dawn, that we had our first experience of starving refugees. On the platform, in the station yard, in the surrounding streets, men, women and children lay

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huddled in groups unable to move, or crawled on the ground begging for bread from passers-by. We were told that some 150 dead were being collected daily in the streets of Alexandropol and that the movement of trains in the station was seriously inconvenienced by dead and enfeebled refugees lying on the lines. By day those who could still move dragged themselves into the fields and ate grass, a fact which the writer could not believe until he saw it later with his own eyes at Erivan. A horse which had died in the traces that day had been half eaten by a swarm of refugees before the owner could get the harness off.

At 9.30 a.m. the Armenian Minister of the Interior visited the train to discuss the installation of the Armenian civil staff in Kars. He told us the most harrowing tales of the refugees, and seemed to consider the only chance of saving the forty or fifty thousand who were in the Alexandropol district would be to get them back to their homes in Kars, Van and Erzeroum within the next few days; but he did not say how this could be done. As the majority of the refugees were in the last stages of weakness and as there was no transport available to move them, such a wholesale migration out of Alexandropol, however convenient to the resident Armenians, certainly did not appear to be a practical proposition for the moment. The alternative was to send corn to Alexandropol from the American Near East Relief ships which were expected at Batum, and from dumps of looted corn in Kars.

The Minister of the Interior brought with him a General Karganoff, who had been Governor of Kars under Imperial Russia, and who had now been selected by the Armenians as Civil Governor of the Province.

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With him came the Armenian civil staff, railway men, telegraph operators, chiefs of police and what not, to the number of about thirty. Extra trucks having been coupled on to the train to accommodate the civil staff, we left Alexandropol in the middle of the afternoon and set off on our way across the high snow-covered plateau that leads to Kars.

At Arpa Chai we passed the Turkish sentry post marking the boundary of the province; marking, too, the boundary of starvation, for the Tartar and Turkish faces that we saw thereafter were well fed, if scowling. The names of the stations were intriguing: Bash-kedikliar, Kurukdeghlia, Kisilchakhchakh,—tongue-twisters for a porter to cry.

At this last station we found a considerable dump of military stores and loot, a brief inspection revealing twenty field guns, a pile of Lewis guns, well over a thousand boxes of Russian S.A.A. (made in England) and four to five hundred tons of good seed-corn. Leaving a guard of one N.C.O., an interpreter and six riflemen to look after this dump, we resumed our journey.

At 8.30 p.m. we arrived at Kars itself. The Province of Kars consists of a high rolling plateau of an average height of five thousand feet, surrounded by mountain ranges and comprising in all some seven thousand four hundred square miles. For eight months of the year it is under snow and during the winter the cold is intense, as much as 60° F. of frost being recorded during January and February. The town itself, originally modern and well built but partially destroyed during the war, lies at the northern edge of the plateau, with the foothills commencing immediately behind it. On the most prominent spur of

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these a mediæval citadel is perched, dominating town and plain alike. It was here during the Crimean War that Captain Williams put up his stubborn defence against the Russians, and the massive walls of the citadel still bear the imbedded cannon balls of the besiegers. Flung out along the remaining spurs are fourteen modern Russian forts.

On our arrival at Kars we found a large and ragged crowd waiting to welcome us. They had been carefully marshalled into groups representing the various races left in the province: Tartars, Kurds, Turks, Persians, Russians, Greeks, Georgians and "sundries." Each group was headed by its own representative and each representative carried a mysterious platter covered with a napkin. After a symposium of flowery speeches of which we understood not one word, the napkins were reverently withdrawn and there was disclosed to our expectant eyes a uniform display of large pieces of bread and small pinches of salt. The B.M.G., propelled forward by an interpreter, partook of this Eastern welcome with all due solemnity—but, be it said, at the price of a considerable thirst.

Chief amongst the delegates who met us was a tall, good-looking Tartar. He introduced himself as Ibrahim Bey, President of the Kars Shura (local government), at our service—and, he would like to add, the government he represented had been duly elected by the people of the province on the best democratic lines as laid down for all time by President Wilson. Further, the Shura, anticipating our arrival, was now in full session in Kars and was ready to proceed at once with the administration of the province under our able guidance. He was informed that this

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was unfortunate as we had brought with us a very handsome Armenian staff for that same purpose; and there the matter rested for the moment.

We stayed that night in the train and the next morning marched up and took over billets in comfortable modern houses overlooking the square in the centre of the town. The Armenian civil staff, who had all along been the object of a good deal of hostile attention from a crowd of townspeople, were left for the time being in their trucks at the station under a strong guard.

That day General Beach and Captain Poidebard left by rail for Sarikamish, a town on the Turkish frontier about midway between Kars and Erzeroum. Here the broad gauge Russian railway changed to the narrow gauge Turkish line, along which the majority of the Turkish troops remaining in the province would have to be evacuated. Here also was stored a large quantity of looted corn which the Turks had been transporting to Erzeroum. In order to expedite the evacuation of the troops and to prevent the evacuation of the corn, a party consisting of Gore-Langton, Coghill and thirty other ranks was sent on in General Beach's train to form a control post at Sarikamish.

So far the Turkish "Army of the Caucasus," with the exception of a few "askars" lounging about the streets, had been conspicuous by its absence. As soon as the Company were settled into billets, the B.M.G. went off to find Shefki Pasha, the Turkish Army Commander. No further instructions had been received regarding Shefki's bloodless arrest, but all anxiety on that score was removed by the discovery that he had taken the safe course and had retired to

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Erzeroum the day before. In his place he left one of his Divisional Commanders, General Ali Rifat, a short, fat, greasy Turk of the worst type, with whom the B.M.G. had a more or less amicable interview.

In the meantime a crowd of townspeople, the majority armed, had collected in the square in front of Company Headquarters. Dotted here and there amongst them were agitators, standing on boxes and making speeches. As soon as the B.M.G. returned, a delegation of the Shura, headed by Ibrahim Bey, presented itself and formally handed in a voluminous letter. This proved to be a petition that the administration of the province should not be put in the hands of the Armenians, for Tartars and Armenians could not live together in peace ; there might, it added, be serious trouble if the Armenians were brought in. The delegation was requested to mind its own business and to retire without delay.

A short time later a second letter was handed in much to the same effect as the first, but couched in decidedly more emphatic terms and ending with the gentle hint that if a favourable reply were not received at once there was no doubt the people would get out of hand, that the Shura would not be responsible for the consequences, etc., etc. The delegation was again politely shown the door and told not to come back until it was sent for.

Up to this time the crowd in the square had been fairly orderly and quiet, but on the delegation returning a second time without a favourable reply, the crowd's attitude changed and there was a good deal of shouting and general excitement. This continued until some one happened to notice one of the Company's Lewis guns being mounted in a commanding window

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and a pile of spare magazines being built up on the window-sill beside it; whereupon the shouting promptly ceased and the crowd dispersed with more speed than dignity.

That was the last we saw of the Shura for the time being; and when night fell shortly afterwards, the Company stood down and proceeded to settle itself into the new billets. Strong piquets were mounted and patrols were sent out at intervals during the night to reconnoitre the surrounding streets.

Owing to the extreme cold both sentry and patrol duty proved to be very exacting. It was found that sentries, in particular, could not be kept on duty for more than a quarter of an hour or so, when they had to be brought back to the guard-room to thaw. The streets patrols were so muffled up in cardigans, sheepskin coats, greatcoats and what not, that it is doubtful whether they could have run a yard in pursuit of a marauder had they met one. However, the night passed off without incident.

Early the next morning the Chief of Railways, who had left the day before to take over the line from the Turks, telegraphed that his train "had been met with big excitement by the Tartars all the way along the line," that "arms and ammunition were being distributed to civilians from the dumps at the stations," that "armed Tartars were holding the frontier bridge over the Arpa Chai," and that in face of such opposition, he and his men had tactfully withdrawn to Alexandropol without attempting to take over the line.

With the patrol which brought this telegram from the station came General Karganoff, the Armenian Civil Governor Elect. He reported that, owing to

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the threatening attitude of the Tartars, his men were unable to leave their trucks unless they had riflemen to protect them. Further, in his opinion, they would not be safe from attack in the station if they stayed there much longer, and he urgently requested that he and his men might be permitted to return to Alexandropol at the first opportunity.

General Beach arrived back at mid-day from Sarikamish, where he had installed Gore-Langton and his control post without difficulty. In the course of the afternoon he attended a conference at which the whole situation was discussed. On summing it up the position was not altogether a comfortable one. There was no doubt that the Moslem population of the province, with a recent massacre upon their conscience, had good reason to fear the installation of an Armenian government—they knew that this must ultimately lead to the return into the province of a large number of desperate and revengeful refugees from Alexandropol. To what height Bolshevik and pro-Turk agitators had worked up this natural fear, to what extent the Moslem population had been armed from Turkish and Russian dumps, and to what lengths they were prepared to go to prevent the return of their historic enemies, it was at that time impossible to say. Certainly our experience of the day before had shown that a fair proportion of the town population was armed; and the existence of the Shura, together with the behaviour of the crowd mustered in the square, indicated that public opinion had to some extent been organized.

On the whole the prospect of one company of British troops successfully installing an Armenian Government in a large province containing a more or

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less openly hostile Moslem population, was not very promising and, after some discussion, it was decided to give up the idea for the time being. General Beach consequently arranged to take back the majority of the Armenians to Alexandropol that evening, leaving only the heads of department in Kars pending confirmation of this decision from Divisional Headquarters. Such confirmation would have to wait until General Beach could report in Tiflis as, previous to our arrival in Kars, the Turks had taken good care to see that all means of direct communication were destroyed. The Russian Wireless Station, which was to have formed our chief means of communication, had been burnt to the ground two days before, and the only alternative means, the Kars-Batum telegraph line, had been cut or, at any rate, was out of working order.

General Beach's train steamed out that evening with a load of much-relieved Armenians, and the Company was left to struggle with the Turks, the Tartars and the temperature as best it could.

Next morning (16 January) the Shura were told, much to their delight, that the government was to be left in their hands for the time being. The meeting ended with protestations of unbounded loyalty to President Wilson, to the Allies in general and to the British Army in particular, and with promises of utmost obedience to the B.M.G.—none of which were borne out by later events.

The next few days were spent in garnering such information as could be obtained of the conditions in the province as a whole. Agents, who could be bought at about twopence coloured and a penny plain, were sent out to the various districts and returned

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with their reports to Kars. Apparently, thanks to the Turkish genius for looting, there was no shortage of corn in the various districts and starvation was non-existent. Apparently, also, there was no shortage of arms, for any civilian who wanted a rifle (and they all did) had only to go and pick one off the numerous unguarded and abandoned supply dumps. Some five or six thousand Turkish troops, the remnants of the IX Turkish Division, were said to be still in the province; but Gore-Langton, who was busy loading corn wagons at Sarikamish for despatch to the Armenians at Alexandropol, reported that every day a considerable number were passing over the frontier into Turkey. As soon as the Turkish troops had withdrawn from any district, the Moslem population set up a local government and sent deputies to Kars to swear unbounded loyalty to the British, etc., etc.—after which they repaired to the Shura and consulted how to get rid of us.

By dint of threats of the summary imprisonment and possible execution of the Turkish Director of Telegraphs, the line to Batum was put into working order by the 18th. Instructions were then received from Divisional Headquarters to return the remaining Armenians to Alexandropol, together with the welcome information that the rest of the Battalion was on its way to join us as reinforcements.

On 24 January Battalion Headquarters, "A" and "D" Companies arrived at Kars Station, and our total strength was thus brought up to four hundred all ranks. Ali Rifat and his minions were turned out of the "Government House" in the gorge behind the town, the B.M.G. moved in, Battalion Headquarters and "A" Company were accommodated

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next to " B " Company on the square in the centre of the town, and " D " Company took over the station guard.

There had been a certain amount of interference with the railway by Tartars along the line, and the arrival of the remainder of the Battalion enabled posts to be sent to all stations between Sarikamish and Arpa Chai to ensure our means of communication with Tiflis. As soon as this had been done, a train consisting of fifteen wagons of corn for the refugees in Alexandropol was despatched from Sarikamish. Within an hour of its departure the Shura knew about it and were pouring in protests to the B.M.G. They managed to collect at the station a small crowd (of which they immediately disowned all knowledge) to meet the train on its arrival in Kars ; but the people, well fed, were not nearly so interested in saving someone else's corn from the British as they had been in saving their own skins from the Armenians. When the train steamed in and the station guard turned out, the nerves of the small collection of waifs and strays gave way and they dispersed without protest. The next day the train was reported, much to our relief, to have arrived safely in Alexandropol.

With the Battalion there arrived a wireless expert, Lieutenant Lee, and a field wireless set which was to make us independent of the Turkish telegraph lines. On erection, however, this proved too weak to communicate with Tiflis, and Lee decided he would have to go back to get further plant.

He dined with the B.M.G. and, cheered by the simple fare, left at about ten o'clock to walk to the station. The night was cold, dark and windy, and the streets deserted. Walking quickly to keep him-

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self warm, Lee swung round a corner into a side street and nearly impaled himself on three fixed bayonets which were being held at a convenient angle by three ragamuffins. Lee was carrying a revolver, but unfortunately he was wearing it under his great-coat. To advance further in the face of the three fixed bayonets looked an unpromising business; to beat a retreat and thus offer his unprotected rear to a close-range attack from the same weapon was equally unattractive; so Lee took the middle course, stood his ground and began pourparlers in the three words of Turkish that he knew.

"Salaam alei Kum—Peace be with you," said Lee; but negotiations got no further, for a bayonet thrust towards his midriff came as a gentle hint for him to close his mouth and put up his hands. His revolver was quickly found and removed, and he was prodded without difficulty into a neighbouring empty house.

Here two of the ragamuffins proceeded to strip him. Every time he protested, which he could only do in English, he received an immediate reply in the form of a jab from a bayonet. When the two men had stripped him as far as they thought decent, namely, to his shirt, vest, pants and socks, they seized him by the arms and backed him up against a wall, while the third man drew his "kinjal" or short Caucasian sword. Up to this point, thinking that the men would be content with robbing him and letting him go, Lee had offered little resistance; but now, realizing that they were not going to stop at robbery, he summoned all his strength; wrenched his right arm free; caught the man on his left arm a smashing blow under the jaw; dodged a bayonet

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thrust by the third man; made a dash for the door and burst out into the street.

In fifty degrees of frost, in his somewhat unsuitable attire and in momentary expectation of a bullet in his back, Lee did record time over the quarter of a mile which separated him from our nearest picket. He turned out a patrol and with vengeance in his heart and a rifle in his hand led them back at a sprint to the scene of the robbery. As might be expected there was no sign of the robbers or of Lee's clothes and belongings.

Lee gave us the best description he could of his assailants, so the next day everybody was on the look-out, amongst others, for a "tall Tartar with a bash on the jaw." Sure enough the very next morning a tall Tartar with his face bandaged up was seen scuttling across a bridge near Headquarters. A hue and cry was immediately raised and he was run to ground in a hovel near the river. He was triumphantly haled before the B.M.G. and the bandages unwound. To everyone's disappointment, it was a boil and not a bruise that was thus brought to light. The actual assailants were never discovered.

On 22 January news was received that a miniature war was in progress between the Karski Tartars and the Georgians on the northern boundary of the province. The Tartars stated that it was the Georgians who had opened the ball by raiding the peaceful Karski district of Ardaghan, pillaging the town of Poskoi Chai, and sacking several neighbouring villages. The Georgians, of course, insisted it was the Tartars who had started the war by raiding the peaceful Georgian district of Akhaltsikh and so on. At any rate there was no doubt that hostilities of some sort were

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HEADQUARTERS OF THE BRITISH MILITARY GOVERNOR NEAR KARS.

CAPTAIN WITHAM LEAVING BY SLEIGH FOR THE SCENE OF HOSTILITIES IN ARDAGHAN.

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in progress, and it was decided that Witham should go up to the affected area, investigate the position and, if possible, put a stop to the fighting.

The road to Ardaghan lay over the mountains and was reported to be seldom open to sleighs for more than a day or two together during the winter. Witham, however, was lucky and managed to get through, but only after six very hard days' travelling. Before proceeding to the scene of hostilities he sent back a preliminary report that conditions in the district of Ardaghan were anything but "peaceful." Small mixed bands of Tartars and demobilized Turkish soldiers were earning a handsome livelihood by making daily raids on the Georgian, Russian and Greek villages in the vicinity and holding up the leading citizens to ransom; in fact, it was becoming a most expensive business for a well-to-do Christian to keep alive. However, as these light-hearted bands of marauders lived in the mountains and only descended into the valley to collect their dividends or to foreclose on some penniless notable's life, little could be done against them without troops, so Witham decided to move on without further ado to the more serious fighting at Poskoi Chai.

On arrival there, he promptly visited the local Tartar chief and the neighbouring Georgian "General," and arranged a truce. Unfortunately Witham fell seriously ill a few days later and, as soon as he was safely confined to his bed, hostilities broke out again with renewed vigour. A British force under Colonel Ritchie was then despatched from Tiflis to deal with the situation and the arrival of these troops a few days later finally put an end to the fighting. Witham went back with Colonel Ritchie to Tiflis, where he

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recovered from his illness and whence he returned home.

In the meantime conditions in Kars itself were comparatively peaceful. Every now and then acts of brigandage were reported in the neighbourhood, but the offenders always got well away before their victims had time to get to Kars and make a report. On one occasion Fairfax-Lucy was shot at in the station yard by a person or persons unknown and spent a happy half-hour playing hide-and-seek with his assailant and taking ineffectual pot shots at him amongst the piles of goods.

The Shura spent their time making protests against the despatch of corn to the Armenians, and at one time were reported by agents to be mobilizing the young men in the country districts with the idea of holding up the trains.

The Turkish troops were being steadily withdrawn from the province or disbanded on the spot; it was hard to say which. British Headquarters at Constantinople were pressing for the complete withdrawal of the Turks and the policy of retaining Turkish guards over dumps in the outlying parts of the province had to be abandoned. What with the railway posts along the line and the control posts at Kisilchakhchakh and at Sarikamish, there were few enough British troops left in Kars as it was and to scatter these remaining men over the province in twos and threes to look after abandoned stores was out of the question. As a consequence, when the Turks withdrew, the majority of these dumps fell into the hands of the local population. In one case, however, it was decided that it would be worth while sending up a guard to take over from the Turks. This was at

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Jurjuna, about fifty miles north of Kars, where there was reported to be the only really large dump apart from those already in our control. Ali Rifat was accordingly instructed to keep a guard at Jurjuna until a relief could be sent there. A party consisting of Corporal Stanfield, A/Corporal New, an interpreter and eight riflemen left by sleigh a few days later. Owing to the shortage of troops in Kars, no officer, warrant officer or sergeant could be spared for the job.

After three days' sleigh journey Corporal Stanfield arrived safely at the out-of-the-way town of Jurjuna, and presented himself at Turkish Headquarters. The only remaining Turkish officer happened to be away for the moment, and the N.C.O's and men of the Turkish guard showed great excitement and some hostility on the appearance of the British troops. The interpreter was produced and Corporal Stanfield explained his mission, but the only reply the Turks gave was to enquire repeatedly how on earth the British troops had arrived in the Caucasus. On being told " through the Dardanelles " they one and all refused to believe it, for, they said, everyone knew that Germany was winning the war, and that the Turks had driven the British out of Palestine, Mesopotamia and Salonika! They were only convinced by the arrival of the Turkish officer who, after apologizing to Corporal Stanfield, had the unpleasant job of informing his men of the true state of affairs in January 1919. That he had managed to keep them in ignorance for so long is a good indication of the interest taken by the Turkish " askar " in anything outside his rations and his rifle.

As soon as the dump had been taken over, the Turkish troops marched away. A few days later Corporal Stanfield collapsed with smallpox and was

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sent back to Kars by a returning ration sleigh, leaving A/Corporal New in charge. On the night of 2 February a band of Tartars and Turkish ex-soldiers about a hundred strong made a raid on the dump. A/Corporal New turned his men out; opened fire; killed four Tartars; wounded two and took several prisoners—altogether a very creditable performance for an isolated post of one acting-corporal and eight riflemen. There was no more trouble at Jurjuna!

At about this time we learnt through agents that imprisoned in a certain room in the Turkish barracks there were two Turkish soldiers who were in some way connected with the burning of the Wireless Station. Without giving any previous notice a party was sent round to the barracks, broke into the room and collected these two men. They were examined and, on being promised a safe conduct out of Turkey, finally consented to give a full account of the burning of the Station.

They described how, after General Walker's visit to Kars, most of the movable wireless plant had been dismantled and sent off to Turkey; how they had been given tins of paraffin and instructions to burn the building down; and how they had been locked up because, through lack of paraffin, they had not been able to do the job thoroughly! Ali Rifat's responsibility for the destruction of the Wireless Station was now pretty clear, and he was promptly placed under arrest and sent off to Tiflis. He was later tried by court martial and duly fined £T.2000 for breach of the Armistice. One Riza Bey took over from him, but shortly afterwards, all the Turkish troops having been withdrawn, he too left with his staff.

Headquarters were reinforced on 30 January by

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the arrival of Captain Fulton, 1st Bengal Lancers; Lieutenant Lorrigan, R.F.A.; and Lieutenant Farrel. Fulton, who had been a prisoner of war in Turkey for two years and could speak the language, proved himself especially useful. On 7 February a troop of Lothian and Border Horse under Lieutenant Tulloh also turned up.

With the aid of these reinforcements it was decided to carry out a closer investigation into the condition of affairs in the outlying parts of the province. Every now and then reports arrived in Kars of brigandage and bloodshed on the more remote frontiers, where Christians of one denomination or another were apparently still in season. The following letter from Kaghizman, a town about forty miles south of Kars, is a typical example of such a report; it was handed in by the Shura and the English translation is theirs:

> "To His Excellency the Governor of H.B.M.'s Military Government, Kars.
>
> "We are understanding from the ruined and wretched people—who were only able to save their single lives by running away from the Armenians to us and who show a pitiful aspect of blood—that the mussulmen are being destroyed and are condamned to be disappeared from the world (by Armenians) by all sorts of new cruel means and bad ways.
>
> "Actually the Armenians are pouring the blood of the poor persons and . . . (here follows a list of standard atrocities) . . . of the people who are amongst them and who have no fault at all except being mussulmen.
>
> "Being convicted that the righteous, helpful and succouring British Nation and its Govern-

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ment will not rest indifferent to and will not allow continue these savagenesses, ferocities and bloodthirstinesses, we 3,000 men of Khaghizman held a meeting at the Mosque Square to protest all the cruel doings and barbarous means which are being applied to our suffering brothers and we haste to attire the kind regards of Great British Nation and H.B.M.'s Government thereto.

"(Signed) Ismail Dzemal (President of Kaghisman Council).
Ismail Bey Zadeh Ahmed.
Aislam Bey Zadeh Kaplan."

Needless to say, the three thousand trusty men of Kaghisman, having concocted and despatched the foregoing protest, lost no time in making a more tangible one—a quick, devastating and no doubt lucrative raid over the border into Armenia; for which the Armenians would duly send in a similar missive at a later date. In fact, when it came to reports, whose blood was being shed and who was to blame depended solely on the religion and nationality of the bearer of the message.

In order to clear the air a little, Fulton with an escort of Yeomanry was sent on a circular tour through Kaghisman and the south of the province, while Farrel with a similar escort left for Merdenek, Olti and the north-western mountains and passes.

On 11 February the train which was bringing back the B.M.G. from a conference with General Walker at Alexandropol was held up by a snowdrift near the station of Bashkidikliar. A blizzard was in progress at the moment and the drifts on the line were already ten or twelve feet deep in places. After much shovel-

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ling by the crew and butting by the engine, it became apparent that further progress was impossible, so it was decided to turn back to Alexandropol. In the meantime, however, new drifts had formed behind the train and retreat proved to be equally impossible. By this time night had fallen; everyone was half frozen and wholly exhausted, and a piercing wind was heaping snow on to the drifts faster than it could be dug away. We commended our souls to Allah and turned in.

During the next two days the blizzard continued to rage and the drifts to increase in size. Reinforced by Singleton and the sixteen other ranks who formed the railway post at Bashkidikliar, we made new efforts to dig the train out—but all in vain. Finally the locomotive's supply of fuel oil gave out; the boiler froze; the telegraph line broke; and the occupants of the train and the garrison of the station—twenty-three souls in all—were as isolated from the world as they would have been at the North Pole. This would not have mattered much except for the fact that the ration train had been held up for over a week and there were less than two days' rations left.

Captain Deacon, who had also been caught in the storm at the station of Selim between Kars and Sarikamish, was in an even worse plight; he had only gone out for a short run down the line and had no rations at all.

As soon as the blizzard ceased, the inhabitants of Kars were turned out *en masse* and put on clearing the line; but owing to the depth and length of the drifts progress was very slow. The party at Bashkidikliar was finally relieved by sleighs from a neighbouring village; but only after nine days on a very

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light diet indeed. How the sleighs ever got to the station is a mystery; the blizzard had frozen the top of the snow to just sufficient depth to carry the horses for a few paces, after which the surface broke and the whole concern, horses, sleigh, driver and all disappeared into an abyss of soft snow in some cases ten feet deep or more.

Captain Deacon, harder pressed for food, set out during the blizzard on the second day to walk to the nearest village, a mile or two away. He was nearly overcome by cold and exhaustion, but finally managed to get through and arrived safely back at Kars a few days later.

Shortly after this incident news arrived in Kars that a well-known Kurdish chief, one Ayub Pasha, had entered the province, bringing with him a large number of armed Kurds. There were various rumours as to what his intentions were. The Shura, who were obviously hostile, said he had no doubt come at the Turks' behest to clear the British out of the province; they recommended that steps should be taken to get rid of him. Local Kurdish agents, however, said that Ayub, having been unable to collect his promised reward for fighting for the Turks during the war, had shaken the dust of Turkey from his feet and had come to offer his services to the British who, he had heard, were more open-handed.

In order to decide which of these two theories was correct, Fulton, who had just returned from his trip to Kaghisman, was sent to visit Ayub in his head-quarters, reported to be in a village a few miles from Novo Selim. He was instructed to bring Ayub back to Kars to discuss matters, if necessary offering him a safe conduct there and back.

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Fulton, with one section of Yeomanry as escort, left Kars on 26 February and arrived safely two days later at Selim. Here, giving out that he was on his way to Sarikamish, he put up for the night. In the headman's house that evening there arrived a Kurd whom Fulton took to be one of Ayub's followers. He managed to get this Kurd alone for a moment and, by means of a bribe, extracted from him the exact position of Ayub's house in the neighbouring village. Before dawn next morning Fulton roused his six Yeomen and slipped quietly out of Selim, hoping thus to arrive at the neighbouring village before Ayub could make his escape or could take steps to prevent them entering.

Dawn was just breaking as they arrived and the streets of the village were empty. Acting on the information that he had obtained Fulton forced an entrance into Ayub's house—and found that worthy still in bed. The sudden appearance of a British officer in the early hours of the morning must have been somewhat startling for Ayub, but, when Fulton informed him of the nature of his mission, he seemed to accept it quietly enough.

Fulton was congratulating himself on the ease with which his job had been carried out when he happened to look out of the window. It was now daylight, and drawn up in good military order on the far side of the village street, two deep and facing Ayub's house, were some four hundred fully armed Kurds. Fulton's six Yeomen looked rather meagre in face of such overwhelming numbers. Ayub Pasha, however, hastened to explain that the men opposite were only a small guard he had turned out in honour of the arrival of a British officer.

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At that moment a clatter of hooves was heard in the village street and the local Tartar Bek with six or seven armed Tartars at his heels galloped up to the door. The Bek dismounted, entered the house and, without preamble, told Fulton he was to leave the district at once. Fulton demurred and was just going to call in a couple of troopers to deal with the situation when Ayub jumped out of bed, seized the Tartar by the scruff of the neck, possessed himself of his two revolvers and kicked him out of the front door. The Kurds opposite, taking the cue from their leader, promptly disarmed the Bek's followers and chased the whole lot of them out of the village. Obviously Ayub Pasha was no friend of the Tartars.

Ayub quickly dressed, chose a bodyguard from his men, and set out with Fulton on his journey to Kars without further ado. He arrived two days later—a fine figure of a man, very tall, dressed in Cossack uniform, with all his arms and accoutrements mounted in silver. He informed us that he and his men had come into the province to work for the British—that (as we knew) he had very great influence with the large population of Kurds within our boundary and that he would like to be given the administration, as a start, of the large patch of Kurdish country in the neighbourhood of Sarikamish. As a result of this visit it was later arranged that Fulton should take up his quarters at Sarikamish and that Ayub should administer the district under his guidance—which he did very faithfully until we left the province.

Owing to the continual despatch of officers and other ranks to England for demobilization the strength of the Battalion was by this time much reduced, and it was becoming increasingly difficult to find men for

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the various duties involved. It was therefore welcome news when Divisional Headquarters informed us that a battalion of Ghurkas, a battalion of Sikhs and a force of Russian police which had been recruited in Tiflis, were being sent to Kars. With these would come Brig.-General Asser, who had been British Military Representative to the Armenian Government at Erivan. General Asser was to take over B.M.G. Kars from the present writer, who was then to go to Erivan in his place.

The above reinforcements duly arrived early in March and the writer left for Erivan a few days later. He can, therefore, only give subsequent events somewhat briefly at second-hand, and he wishes to apologize for any omissions or inaccuracies that may have crept into the remainder of this narrative.

Apparently the appearance of such considerable reinforcements in the province had a good effect on the Tartar population; at any rate, comparative peace reigned in the land for some six weeks after their arrival. At the end of this period however there were signs that the agitators were getting busy again; and the old objection to sending corn to the Armenians was once more the root of the trouble.

The first incident occurred when a crowd, which had assembled at the station to demonstrate against the despatch of a corn train to Alexandropol, returned *en masse* to the square in front of Battalion Headquarters to continue their demonstration. Lucy, riding in amongst them on his horse, tried to induce them to disperse and got somewhat man-handled for his pains. The incident ended with one platoon of "A" Company clearing the square with fixed swords.

A few days later there was another demonstration

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and, on this occasion, the crowd unexpectedly headed for a church near the station where a considerable quantity of Russian rifles and ammunition was stored. The crowd quickly disposed of the Russian policeman who was on guard and proceeded to break in the door. Exactly what happened thereafter is somewhat obscure, but apparently Huyshe-Elliot and a couple of riflemen forced their way to the church door and somehow or other a Tartar got shot. The Tartars had by this time got their tempers up and it is doubtful what the end of the affair would have been had not a troop of Lothian and Border Horse put in a providential appearance. They arrived at full gallop, swords drawn, down the street leading from the square and straightway charged the crowd in the rear. Within a few seconds there was not a Tartar left in sight.

The Shura, as usual, denied all participation in these happenings and contented themselves with drawing the moral that, to avoid trouble, the despatch of corn trains had better be stopped and the Armenians left to starve. There was, of course, no doubt that they were actively fomenting the agitation, and this affair at the church was the last straw; the B.M.G., his patience exhausted, decided to arrest the Shura *en bloc* and have them deported out of the country.

As it was anticipated that there might be trouble from the Tartars on the wholesale arrest of their leaders, the business of rounding up the Shura was organized on a grand but secret scale. There was a zero day and a zero hour and all troops received full operation orders.

On the day appointed the B.M.G. summoned a special plenary meeting of the Shura at 3 p.m. in the

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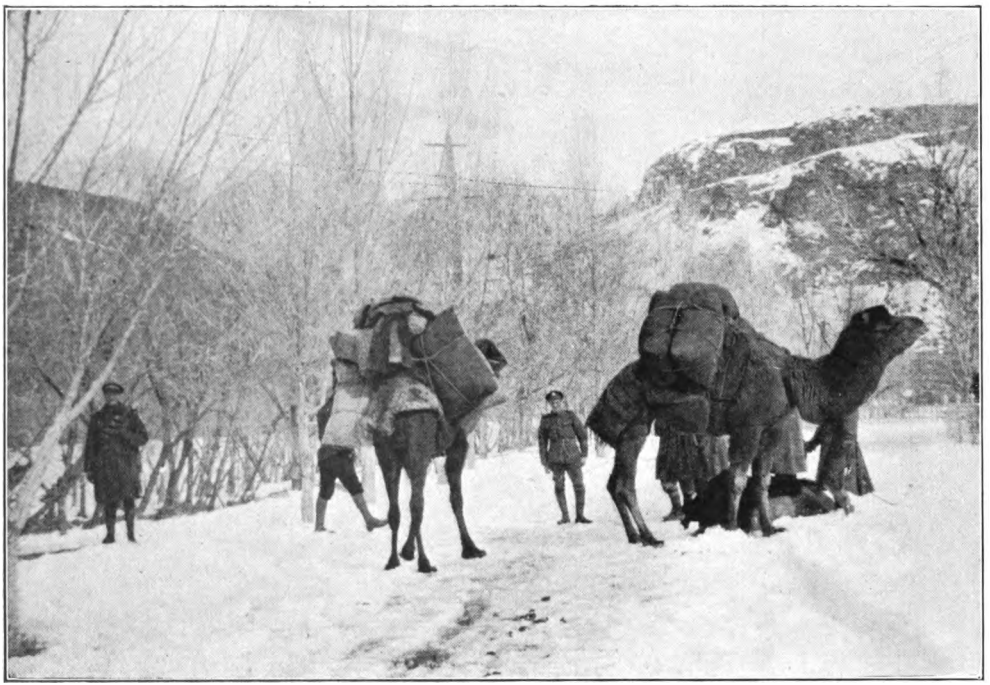

CAMELS FROM A CONVOY WHICH WAS INTERCEPTED CARRYING ARMS TO THE TARTARS OF AKHALKHALAKI.

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Council House overlooking the square. At 3.5 p.m. a Battalion of Ghurkas debouched from the neighbouring street and surrounded the Council House; two armoured cars drew up in front of the entrance; the Battalion turned out on the far side of the square; and the B.M.G. entered the building. He told the assembled delegates that they were, one and all, under arrest and that they had better "go quietly." At this crucial moment a Ghurka, for no apparent reason, fired three rounds through the window, causing some commotion within; but, when this excitement had died down, the delegates filed quietly enough out of the building and were loaded, unresisting, into lorries. They were driven, under guards supplied by the Battalion, direct to the station, where they were hustled into a waiting train which immediately left, without delay and without the delegates' baggage, for Tiflis.

As soon as the arrest was complete leaflets were posted round the town stating what had been done and that there was no reason for alarm. As a precaution frequent patrols were sent out that night by the Battalion to watch the streets. A Tartar, who was called upon to halt by one of these patrols, incontinently took to his heels. In spite of admonitory yells he persisted in his flight and had almost reached the corner of the street when a rifleman of the patrol dropped to the kneeling position and, with his first shot, brought the Tartar tumbling to the snow—the only casualty of the operation.

So fell the Shura—and there is little more to be told. Shortly after the general arrest, the Battalion, now scarcely a Company strong, was recalled to Batum. There it was further reduced to a cadre

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and, on 5 June 1919, this cadre sailed for England.

Some time after the Battalion's departure from Kars the Armenians were brought back, in force, into the province and the British troops withdrawn. The Armenians remained in dominion for just one year. At the end of this time, the British being safely out of the way, the Turks once more invaded the country, and the old story was repeated. As soon as the Turks appeared, the Tartars rose and joined them; the Armenians were again massacred or chased out of the country and the Turks finally took untrammelled control of the province, where they remain to this day.

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